

Montana SCHOOLS

November/December 1997

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Making good schools better

Representatives from educational organizations provide input on the school improvement program

On November 8, 1997, representatives from Montana's teacher specific professional organizations traveled to Helena to meet with State Superintendent Nancy Keenan and the Office of Public Instruction's (OPI) School Improvement Team.

"The school improvement process authorized by the 1997 Legislature has to be broad-based, inclusive, and collaborative," said Keenan.

"Our greatest resources in this process are those people who work

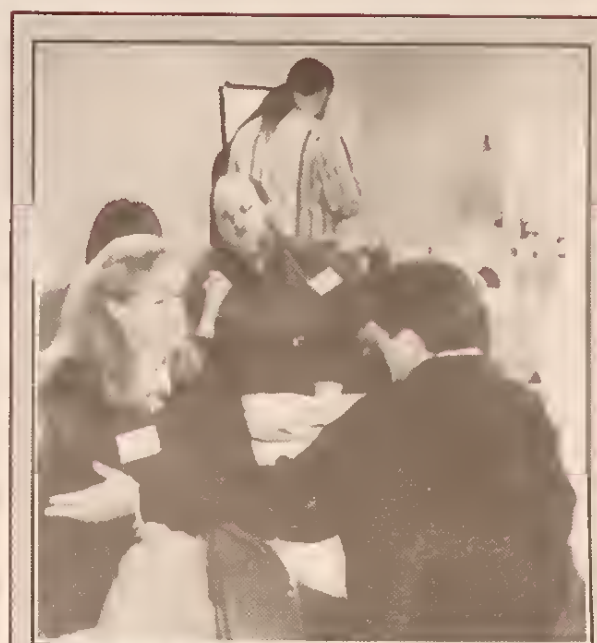
directly with education and its application in the classroom. None of us can do it alone." Keenan called this meeting a critical component to informing and engaging Montana's teachers and other education professionals

Montana Council of Teachers of Mathematics, stated, as educators "we need to work together," and become involved and "form as many partnerships as possible."

Keenan termed the November 8th meeting a critical step to improve the flow of communication between OPI and the field.

Standards work

The flow of information and improved communication will prove important to the work of revising and developing content and performance standards (see pages 4-6). A central component in the School Improvement Program, the standards project's success depends heavily upon the collaboration of the professional educators' associations and organizations along with the other partners in the school improvement process, according to Keenan. Aiming to complete and



State Superintendent Keenan talks with Susan Sielstad, Montana Art Education Association, at a recent meeting with representatives from Montana's teacher specific professional organizations and associations.

submit the standards for reading, mathematics, technology, and health enhancement to the Montana Board of Public Education (MBPE) for approval by March 1998, the standards project timeline for these first four subject areas is intensive and ambitious. It has been divided into five distinct but interlocking phases that rely on the input and participation of all of OPI's partners. This is true for the writing and

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The Montana Board of Public Education and OPI, in partnership with Montana's professional organizations and associations, community groups, parents, and the state's higher education community, are building on Montana's current standards by revising content standards and developing performance standards in the following subject areas:

- ✓ Reading
- ✓ Mathematics
- ✓ Technology
- ✓ Health Enhancement

in the School Improvement Program.

Communication key

Designed as an all-day dialogue, the November 8th meeting gave participants the chance to talk at length with Keenan, her staff, and each other about

- ✓ creating better partnerships between OPI and Montana's education communities;
- ✓ identifying liaisons at OPI to communicate with each professional organization; and
- ✓ identifying the role of professional organizations in the school improvement process of standards revision and development.

While many participants came to the table disgruntled by the loss of OPI content area specialists, a product of budget cuts by the 1995 Legislature, most left understanding OPI's budgetary constraints and convinced that, as Karen Longhart, President of the

OPI releases report on student assessment data

On December 17, 1997, complying with legislation passed by the 1997 Montana Legislature, the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) released a report on student assessment data.

What data

That legislation, House Bill 28 (HB 28), requires OPI and local school boards to release student assessment data to the public in a manner that protects individual rights to privacy. The data HB 28 specifies is from norm-referenced standardized tests that schools provide to OPI to meet the Board of Public Education's testing requirements for grades 4, 8, and 11 in reading, language arts, math, science, and social studies.

Calling the scores "a snapshot of our schools at a particular point in time," State Superintendent Nancy Keenan cautioned against using this information in negative ways. "It is absolutely critical we use this information in a constructive manner to help all student improve their academic achievement," she said.

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It is absolutely critical we use this information in a constructive manner to help all students improve their academic achievement.

—Nancy Keenan

Message from Nancy Keenan

Student Assessment & School Improvement

In the previous issue of *Montana Schools*, I discussed the Office of Public Instruction and Board of Public Education's "School Improvement" initiative. The School Improvement Program was authorized by the '97 Legislature to make sure Montana's children are prepared to meet the academic challenges they will face upon graduation.

You may recall that the School Improvement Program includes five separate components. The *Standards Project* will review and revise our present academic standards. The *Assessment Project* will align assessment measures to state standards to accurately measure our students' progress. The *Educational Profile Project* will develop quality indicators of quality schools so parents, educators and the public can adequately understand how schools are meeting their education goals. The *Teacher Professional Development Project* will help teachers upgrade their skills to meet the changing needs of curriculum and students. And the *Accreditation Project* will explore different options for schools to obtain accreditation.



In my last column I discussed the need for reviewing and setting high academic standards for our children. That process will build on the work that you have been doing in your districts. I am pleased to report we are working closely with the Board of Public Education, our professional teaching associations, and other stakeholders to meet that challenge.

On another note, the last legislature passed House Bill 28, which requires OPI and local school boards to release student standardized test results in a manner that protects individual rights to privacy. This month OPI, for the first time, will release student standardized test results for Montana 4th, 8th and 11th grade students in reading, mathematics, language arts, social studies, and science.

This information will, no doubt, create considerable discussion and some consternation within local school districts across Montana. It will be subject to multiple interpretations, some valid, some not. It is critical that you take a close look at the test results for your school, talk with your colleagues, and clearly understand what you do well and where there is need for improvement.

Overall, the report is good news for Montana. It demonstrates what we have long known—Montana students continue to score well above the national averages in all grades and subject areas.

Distilling the test information into an easily understood report was a daunting task. The report analyzes data from more than 900 schools, thousands of students, and three different testing services.

The information is organized by school, grade level, and subject matter and then sorted by county and school districts within those counties. It reports the percentage of students achieving advanced, proficient, nearing proficiency and novice status in each subject area. Statewide averages have been computed for different size schools for comparison purposes.

It is my firm purpose that these reports are to be used first and foremost to assess how well Montana students are mastering their subject matter. We need to evaluate which programs are working and why. Those areas of weakness need to be identified so that we can develop realistic strategies for improvement. It is imperative we use this information in a constructive manner to improve our task of providing Montana children with the best education we possibly can.

We all know there is much more to a good school than test grades. While they are important, tests are only one indicator of a quality school. These scores are just a "snapshot" of our schools at a particular point in time. We need to analyze why some students are performing better than others and set for ourselves the preeminent goal of helping all students improve their academic achievement.

There will be some who will attempt to make comparisons by districts or schools. There will be those who will want to categorize some schools as "good" and others as "bad." There is no such thing as "my" kids are doing well, but "yours" are doing poorly. They are all our children. The entire system benefits when we seek to provide a quality education for every child.

Here's wishing you all a most joyous holiday season. I count among my most cherished blessings the daily opportunity to work with you for the betterment of the next generation of Montanans.

Nancy Keenan

MAEMSP plans principals conference

Each year, to maintain high quality leadership in Montana schools, the Montana Association of Elementary and Middle School Principals and the Department of Education at MSU—Bozeman sponsor an Aspiring Principals Conference. This year's conference, *Previewing the Principalship* will be held April 18, 1998, at the Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman.

Who should attend

Intended for those interested in becoming an elementary or secondary principal, the conference will provide participants with an opportunity to:

- ✓ explore the peaks and valleys in a principal's day-to-day life;
- ✓ reflect on past and present experiences, strengths, and weaknesses;
- ✓ learn from experienced principals and educators; and

- ✓ examine the School Administration Program offered by MSU—Bozeman, Billings, and Northern.

Since the need for high quality leadership in the schools is great, current school administrators are urged to encourage teachers and counselors with leadership potential to attend the conference.

For more information

For more information on the conference, view the Aspiring Principals web page at <http://www.montana.edu/wwweduc/deptedu/edadminAspirPr.html> or contact Irma Tiffany (994-6786), Pat Lane (994-6670) or Dr. Keith Chambers, keithc@montana.edu. To register, call Annie Carson (587-6065). ■

—Lori McCollim, Chair, MAEMSP Aspiring Principals Committee

Montana Community Partners update

In response to concerns raised by consumers and advocacy groups, Montana Community Partners (MCP), providing access to mental health services for adults and children, has revised the grievance process and streamlined access to care.

Dedicated telephone line

On December 8, 1997, the MCP toll free number (888-599-2233) will become a dedicated telephone line for consumers and their representatives. By calling, consumers will have immediate access to crisis intervention, advocacy services, and information about enrollment and eligibility. The phone service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Grievance and Appeals Process

MCP has implemented a "no wrong door — no wrong way" approach to filing a grievance or appeal that simplifies the filing process and speeds up its resolution. Grievances deal with problems with the services you are receiving, whereas appeals deal with the medical necessity of services and whether or not MCP will provide them. MCP advocacy staff can help with all grievances and can be reached by calling MCP and pressing the #2 option.

Changes in the Eligibility Process

To ensure that applicants get the clinical services they need when they need them, MCP has made significant changes to the

eligibility process. Anyone who is Medicaid eligible is automatically eligible to receive access to necessary mental health services through MCP. County Offices of Public Assistance still establish Medicaid eligibility.

Low-income applicants who are not eligible for Medicaid may still qualify for assistance under MCP's Non-Medicaid Eligible Program. To qualify, applicants must have an income that falls within 200 percent of poverty, as well as meet clinical requirements (an adult with a serious disabling mental illness or a child with a serious emotional disturbance).

To apply for services

Applications can be obtained from a mental health professional or by calling MCP. Enrollment can proceed more rapidly if done in person with a mental health professional. If applicants can bring proof that they meet income requirements to their first visit with a provider, the provider can complete a clinical assessment at the same time.

MCP can authorize a variety of services including outpatient therapy, case management, respite care, day treatment, hospitalization, medication management, crisis intervention, therapeutic foster care, and group home care. If you feel you or a family member qualifies, please call MCP for more information. ■

—Toni Jensen, Montana Community Partners

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Professional meetings on school improvement

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revision of the standards, for the implementation of those standards, and for the accompanying professional development requirements accompanying implementation.

As Maureen Thomas, Montana

Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance, noted at the November 8, 1997, meeting when the standards process was being discussed, "We need to take the standards and move to the curriculum. The implementation and professional development plans are the hard parts."

Other related meetings

On November 21-22, 1997,

Health enhancement teachers share a laugh while working to review and develop standards.



School district personnel work in small groups on standards for technology.

24 Montana health enhancement teachers convened in Helena to develop content standards for Health Enhancement.

The joint effort between OPI and the Montana Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance resulted in a draft which will go forth to the field for comments. This process follows those that are being

used for the development of standards in reading, mathematics, and science.

On the same days, teams from many Montana school districts met in Helena to discuss the development of technology planning. ■



Report on student assessment data

(Continued from page 1)

The report OPI prepared for the public and the Legisla-

There is much more to a good school than test scores. While tests are important, they are not the only indicator of a quality school.

—Nancy Keenan

ture presents the information in a useful, understandable manner. The information is organized by grade level in each school and includes the number of students taking the test, the average score, and the percentage distribution of student scores into four ranges described as "advanced," "proficient," "nearing proficiency," and "novice."

When her office released the report, Keenan said that the information it contained was a

"good tool for school districts to use in gauging how their students are doing and how their programs are working."

She emphasized, however, "there is much more to a good school than test scores. While tests are important, they are not the only indicator of a quality school. Local school districts," she suggested, "can combine this testing information with additional information critical to student performance, such as

changes over time, programs targeted to specific schools and support services available to students."

Data double-check

Before releasing the final report, OPI sent each district its schools' report for final verification of the data. They were asked to submit any corrections to OPI by December 15, 1997. The few corrections were incorporated in the final report OPI released. ■

Bridges

Great public relations is no quick fix

Whether it's losing weight or making dinner, everyone wants a quick fix. Even when it comes to building support for our schools, people look for easy cures.

If you want to know a professional PR secret, *these quick-fix approaches rarely work.* They merely apply whitewash to a fence that really needs a great paint job. And most of us know that a great paint job takes plenty of scraping, priming, and painting. When you're finished, you have something that will last for years, and you'll know the extra effort was worth it.

Scraping needed

It's the same with great school public relations. We, too, have to do our scraping, priming, and painting. First, let's look at that dreaded task of scraping. We need to peel back and scrape to the base foundation of how people really feel about our schools and what our schools should be doing. This scraping function, called research,

is one of the most important steps to take to build great public relations. Next, we need to choose our primer—those underlying communication strategies that will serve us well and drive our communication program—no matter how stormy our community's climate seems to get.

Selecting messages

Now it's time to select our messages, and we need to make sure they can easily be applied to our target audiences. Some messages may be more colorful than others, but remember—they need to penetrate and stick with our key audiences. And, finally, we need to select our brushes, the communication techniques that will apply our messages to the right audiences. And, just like brushes, one size or one technique will not fit all our needs.

Build on success

Let's first start with September's Gallup Poll. Local education received either an "A" or a "B"

from 46 percent of those polled. For the most part, many of our schools and systems have more than half of the PR battle won. But now you need to develop community support and communication programs around your school and the issues affecting them.

Start by doing some research so that your PR effort is on target. Ask people what they really think about the job you are doing and really listen to what they have to say. You'll hear a lot of misperceptions and some stinging truths. Don't be discouraged. You need to hear these because they reflect the very foundation on which you need to build your communication effort.

Can't do it all

Strategically, your next step is realizing that you won't be able to reach or influence all the people all the time. Don't bite off more than you can chew. Start slowly with an effective and proven relationship-building technique that calls for a lot more time than

money. Start talking to opinion leaders in your community about school issues. If you are a principal, start talking to small groups of parents. Leave room for dialogue and really do listen and do get back with them if you don't have an answer when you meet.

Build Credibility

These meetings with key parents and leaders begin building credibility between your schools and your community. And, once you have credibility and a great school program, school support is on its way. I have seen it happen hundreds of times during my career in school public relations.

This is not a quick fix approach. But like a great paint job, it will last for years to come. ■

This article is written by Rich Bagin, Executive Director of the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA); it appeared in the October 1997 issue of NSPRA's newsletter "Network."

Standards revision and development

Effective July 1, 1997, Montana's General Appropriations Bill, HB2, funded the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) with \$350,000 over the next biennium to support the School Improvement Plan. This legislation was designed to bring about coordinated improvement in the performance and accountability of Montana's K-12 education system. The bill directed OPI to revise the model learner goals, develop a set of educational indicators for measuring student and school achievement, and produce a Montana Educational Profile.

OPI, in partnership with the Board of Public Education (BPE), has embarked on the initial phases of the standards revision and development project to revise content standards and develop performance standards. This effort will build upon the good work that Montanans have already done through Project Excel-

Standards can improve achievement by clearly defining what is to be taught and what kind of performance is expected. —Diane Ravitch, Assistant Secretary of Education under President Bush

lence of 1987-1989 and curriculum development at the state and local levels. In addition, the national standards projects and other state efforts in standards development will be reviewed. The timeline and workplan for the standards project is outlined in this issue.

When will the work be completed?
The standards for reading, mathematics, technology, and health enhancement will be completed and submitted for approval to the Board of Public Education by March 1998, with expected implementation for reading and mathematics in Montana schools by Fall 1998.
A future timeline will address the revision and development of the other program area standards: communication arts; science; arts; social studies; vocational and practical arts; library and information skills; and guidance.

Why develop standards?
The Montana Standards Framework is to improve student learning for all. Setting high standards for learning provides clear expectations for students, schools, and communities; establishes a yardstick for how good is good enough; allows focused decision-making based on common information; and guides the direction for change, future needs, and technologies. The standards will provide a structure from which district, school, and classroom



curriculum can be developed or revised, organized, implemented, and assessed. The standards will be the basis for the development of a comprehensive, balanced, and aligned assessment system at the state, local, and classroom levels.
Montana needs standards revision and development because the standards developed through Project Excellence are 10 years old. We have new information about best practices for improving teaching and learning, and federal requirements for comprehensive standards now exist. Montanans don't want separate standards for Title I students, Special Education students, Gifted and Talented students, and still another set for the rest of our children. Montanans want standards for all students.

Writers and Readers
The writers and readers have been drawn from candidates nominated by Montana's professional organizations and associations and from higher education. Over 125 education

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How will the work be completed?

The work plan to revise content standards and develop performance standards is comprehensive and inclusive; however, it remains a work in progress, especially in the latter phases. As outlined here, the activities have been organized into five separate phases, and each phase addresses a critical component in the process of

researching, writing and revising, gaining approval, designing a professional development plan, and, finally, implementing the standards. The OPI Team welcomes insights and suggestions for improvements from all partners in this effort. The following pages outline the work plan as it now stands.

Phase one: Research & Communication	Activities	Timeline	Responsibility
<p>Establishing the framework entails the research and analysis of the standards development process and standards documents from other states, the national standards projects, and Montana's Project Excellence. After careful analysis, common language and definitions were established and a common format designed. These elements provide the framework for the standards work in all program areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Research: collect and analyze samples of standards developed by other states and districts, and national standards workDefine terms and format for final documentIdentify work teams and define roles for Facilitators, Writers, Critical Readers, and OPI TeamEstablish guidelines for development of standards and orientation training materials	June-December 1997	OPI School Improvement Team (OPI Team)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Establish networks with program specific professionals	August-November 1997 December 1997	OPI Standards Director Linda Peterson
<p>To ensure broad-based involvement, a process has been created to engage professional education associations and organizations, higher education, the Montana Board of Public Education, tribal education leaders, and other interested parties in the revision and development of content and performance standards. The communication plan includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">establishing electronic and traditional communication networks with Montana's education communities;holding informational meetings with the various education communities;gathering nominations from these groups for writers and reviewers of the standards;disseminating draft documents to educators for comment; anddistributing the final documents for public review, through local PTAs and the public library system. <p>Major partners are the Montana Board of Public Education, the Governor's Office, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, the Board of Education, and the professional educators' associations and organizations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Select facilitators, writers, and critical readersEstablish work timeline for reading, mathematics, and technology standards and benchmarksEstablish OPI Executive TeamPublish School Improvement BookletIdentify stakeholder groupsPresent informational and conceptual dialogues with stakeholder groupsSeek nominations for writers and readers	September-December 1997	OPI Team
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify contact persons within stakeholder groupsEstablish OPI Standards Work TeamRegularly communicate with OPI Staff and stakeholder groups through contact people	December 1997	OPI Team and Facilitators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Create conference area on OPI METNET and School Improvement area on OPI Home Page	July 1, 1997	State Supt. Nancy Keenan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Set dates for town meeting - Satellite downlink	September 1997	Beth Satre and OPI Staff
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Write reports to the Legislature, MBPE, and Governor		OPI Staff
		September - December 1997	OPI Team and Linda Peterson
		November 1997-January 1998	OPI Staff
		November 1997 Monthly	Linda Peterson
		January 1998	Steve Meredith
		March 1998	Michael Hall and NETC
		Ongoing	Linda Peterson

See page 5 for phases two and three of the work plan

Standards, cont.

leaders representing K-16 education were invited to nominate writers and readers for the standards work in mathematics, reading, and technology.

The three writing teams will each have 12 discipline experts. The six criteria used to determine the membership of the writing teams were:

- ✓ nominations from the specific discipline professional organizations;
- ✓ K-16 teacher experts;
- ✓ appropriate geographic distribution;
- ✓ cultural diversity representation;
- ✓ at least one administrator; and
- ✓ special populations representation.

Facilitators

From candidates recommended by the professional organizations, the OPI School Improvement Team (OPI Team) selected one facilitator for each subject area. The facilitator's role is to guide the writing process, to review the comments, and to assist OPI with editing the draft and final documents. The facilitators will meet with the OPI Team to establish the process, structure, and agenda for the writing session. The process will build consensus; however, if a problem exists, the OPI Standards Director, Linda Peterson, in consultation with the facilitator, will make all final decisions.

Research and Guidance

Several documents will be reviewed and analyzed throughout the process. OPI staff has spent many hours studying standards products from other states, national projects, and work that has been completed in Montana —for

example, the Montana Framework for Improving Mathematics and Science Education developed by the Montana Council for Teachers of Mathematics and the Montana Science Teachers Association.

Montana is behind other states in developing content and performance standards for student learning. There are advantages to this situation. We have many other projects, processes, and products to study. We can learn from other's successes and mistakes.

Therefore, the writers and facilitators will review what other states have completed to determine the merits for use of that work. They will analyze national standards for reading, mathematics, and technology and compare them to Montana's Accreditation Standards in order to align them to the work done in the state.

Other Key Responders

Montana is a small community. When it comes to education, our children, and our schools, each of us is vitally interested in the

Collaboration key to standards project

OPI seeks to involve all education stakeholders in the process of standards revision and development. Communication partnerships have developed with a variety of education and community associations. We work closely with many groups that reach broad constituencies that could not be reached by the OPI staff alone.

The Fall of 1997 has provided the OPI staff to visit with many groups to discuss the standards revision and development, as well as the other pieces of the school improvement plan. We list here only a few of the education associations and organizations with whom we collaborate.

Montana Board of Public Education, Parent Teacher Assn., Montana Education Assn., Montana Federation of Teachers, School Administrators of Montana, Montana Indian Education Assn., Montana Assn. of Supervision and Curriculum Development, Montana Advisory Council for Indian Education, Council for Exceptional Children, Montana Assn. of Health, PE, Recreation, and Dance, Assn. of Gifted and Talented Educators, Montana Alliance for Arts Education, Montana Teachers of Mathematics, Montana Library Assn., Montana State Reading Council, Montana Vocational Assn., Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Northwest Assn. for Schools and Colleges, Commissioner of Higher Education, Montana Assn. of County Superintendents of Schools, Certification, Standards, and Practices Advisory Council, Higher Education Mathematics Academic Committee, Montana Assn. of Teachers of English Language Arts

process. The standards work will be completed by the experts in reading, mathematics, and technology. Because we know of the great interest, however, the draft documents will be made available in a variety of ways. The first draft will be distributed to the contact person of the professional organizations and associations in the state. Those organizations represent teachers and administrators in K-12 through higher education institutions, policy makers,

(Continued on page 6)

Work plan, cont.

Phase two: Revision & Development

In Phase Two, the writers will complete the work of revising the content standards and developing performance standards and benchmarks. This work will start with the thoughtful review of the research and analysis from Phase One.

Activities	Timeline	Responsibility
• Facilitators meet with OPI Standards Team to develop process, structure, and agenda for work session	December 13, 1997	OPI Team and Content Area Facilitators
• Writers' work session: ✓ Use materials gathered from broad-based research ✓ Develop shared overarching statement for content area ✓ Develop rationale for content area standards ✓ Identify the essential knowledge and essential skills of the content area ✓ Write Content and Performance standards for grades 4, 8, and 12 ✓ Write benchmarks for grades 4, 8, and 12	January 4-6, 1998	OPI Team, Facilitators, and Writers
• Identify overarching issues, e.g., cultural diversity, technology, workplace competencies, lifelong learning	January 4-6, 1998	OPI Team and Facilitators
• Develop performance standards for overarching issues	January 19, 1998	

Phase three: Revision & Approval

When the writers complete the draft standards outlined in Phase Two, a systematic review process begins. Critical readers and professional organization and association contact people have been identified. They will coordinate the comment phase of the standards development. Once comments have been reviewed and the draft documents revised, the writers will prepare them for presentation to the Board of Public Education.

Activities	Timeline	Responsibility
• Identify an outside critical friend to review standards work	January 1998	Linda Peterson
• Draft document (content standards, benchmarks, performance standards) formatted	January 7-12, 1998	OPI Word Processing — Gail Hansen
• Distributed to writers and facilitators	January 14, 1998	Linda Peterson
• Review draft documents • Use communication networks to distribute draft documents to stakeholder groups	January 16-30, 1998	Facilitators, writers, readers, content groups, and OPI Team
• Review comments from field and make revisions	January 31, 1998	Facilitators and OPI Team
• TeleVideo Conference to incorporate final changes	February 7, 1998	Facilitators, Writers, OPI Team
• Final review and revisions	February 14, 1998	OPI Team and Facilitators
• Document proofed and revised	February 20, 1998	Marlene Wallis and Gail Hansen
• Documents prepared for MBPE	February 23-26, 1998	Colleen Dever
• Present the Montana Standards Framework content and performance standards and the benchmark standards for grades 4, 8, and 12 in reading, mathematics, health enhancement, and technology to the Montana Board of Public Education for approval	March 1998	Nancy Keenan, State Superintendent of Public Instruction
• Notice for Hearing	March - May 1998	Montana Board of Public Education

See page 6 for phases four and five of the work plan

Editor's note: There are excellent teachers and students all across the state who deserve special mention. Although it contains the people who have been brought to my attention, the following list of award winners is not exhaustive. We will run periodic "Kudos" column in Montana Schools, so if you know someone who should be included, please let me know (444-4397; bsatre@opi.mt.gov).

Patty Holmes Myers was recently named the Montana Teacher of the Year. A second grade teacher at Great Falls Lewis and Clark Elementary, Holmes Meyers is a woman of great persuasive skills and will represent the education field in our state well during her year as an education spokesperson.

The other finalists were Kathleen Agnew an English teacher at Sweet Grass County High School in Big Timber and Colleen Cooper-Asworth, fifth grade teacher at Hellgate elementary.

Valier students captured top honors in both the junior high and high school divisions at the 13th Montana State Science Olympiad, held November 25, 1997, in Bozeman. Fifty-five teams in the junior high division and 42 teams from the High School division converged on Bozeman to compete in a variety of events that tested their knowledge and skills in science. Both teams were coached by Ken Diede, science instructor at Valier High, and assisted by Ralph King.

Valier's teams both earned the right to compete in the National

Science Olympiad in Grand Rapids, Michigan this coming May. In the elementary division, Big Timber and Big Sandy came in second and third. In the high school division, Helena finished second and Bozeman was third.

Montana's 1996 Presidential Awardees for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching are Ruth Brocklebank—Skyview High School Billings; Terri Goyins—Martha Fox Elementary School, Belgrade; Carl Johnston—Monforton School, Bozeman; and Richard Jones—Billings Sr. High School, Billings. This prestigious award represents the highest standards of excellence in content expertise, pedagogy, and leadership in the nation. Recipients form a cadre of teachers that exemplifies teaching to high standards.

Four Montana secondary school educators received Milken Family Foundation National Educator Awards this fall. Principal Pat Hould—Livingston, and teachers Kathleen Agnew—Big Timber, Laurie Kelly—Roundup, Dean Peterson—Missoula Hellgate. Each is invited to attend a National Educator Awards Retreat in California, where they will spend three days at an education symposium and receive a cash award of \$25,000.

Laura Pickett was honored for her work with the Family Resource Center at Lowell Elementary School in Missoula. She was one of only two individuals who received an Apple P.I.E. (Parents in Education) Award in the nation. She was nominated by Barbara Riley, director of Family BASICS, and Kathy Grant, Title I parent coordinator with Missoula County Public Schools. In their nomination letter, these two wrote: "Laura Pickett spear-

headed the drive to open a family resource center (FRC) for parents that nobody usually saw at school, and in the last two years this FRC has made a huge difference in the lives of many parents and their children."

Last spring, Helena Middle School (HMS) brought home the state championship MathCounts team trophy. Competing for HMS were Kurt Crowley, Trevor Binney, Anne Ladenburger, and Alan Zackheim. In individual competition, Binney finished first, and Zackheim placed second. Their coach is HMS teacher Rick Edelen.

Dr. Carol Minnick Santa, coordinator of language arts (K-12) for the Kalispell Public Schools and codirector of Project CRISS, was recently elected the new vice-president of the International

Reading Association. Santa will serve as president of the Association in 1999-2000. Dr. Santa is the editor of the Pegasus Reading program and directs the First Steps Reading project in Kalispell.

Claudia Crase, fourth-grade teacher at Helena's Hawthorne Elementary school, received a First Class Teacher Award from Sallie Mae. The award honors 53 exemplary first-year teachers from around the nation. Crase was nominated for the award by her principal Deb Jacobsen, who noted, "Claudia makes learning fun and exciting for her students.... Teaching is a gift in Claudia—and Claudia is a gift to teaching."

(Continued on page 12)

Standards work plan, cont.

Phase Four: Professional Development Plan

A comprehensive professional development plan will be developed in coordination with the Montana Board of Public Education, professional education organizations and associations, higher education, and others interested. Phase Four will provide a strategic approach for disseminating the standards for use by teachers and administrators through regional and on-site workshops and other technical assistance efforts.

Activities	Timeline	Responsibility
• Establish an OPI Professional Development (P.D.) Team	January 1998	Linda Peterson
• Discuss teacher education program standards review process and connections to K-12 student standards project	February 1998	Professional Development (P.D.) Team
• Establish goals and objectives for P.D.	January 30, 1998	P.D. Team
• Develop draft performance indicators for P.D.	January 30, 1998	P.D. Team
• Develop P.D. Plan	February 28, 1998	P.D. Team
• Distribute Draft P.D. Plan to stakeholders listed in standards section	March 15, 1998	Linda Peterson
• Plan regional workshops	January 30, 1998	P.D. Team
• Prepare standards framework documents for workshops	March 15, 1998	P.D. Team and Colleen Dever
• Provide training for K-12 teachers on Standards Framework for reading, mathematics, technology, and health enhancement	April-May 1998	P.D. Team and other OPI staff
• Seek additional funding for the professional development and implementation phases as well as the second stage of the standards development	May-June 1998	OPI School Improvement Team

The most important phase may be phase five: implementation. The standards written and approved can be good only in so far as they provide meaningful structure around which local curriculum can be developed or revised, organized, implemented, and assessed. An implementation plan will be designed by a group of education professionals, working in conjunction with the OPI and the Montana Board of Public Education, to enable the standards to be used meaningfully in districts, schools, and classrooms.

Phase Five: Implementation	Activities	Timeline	Responsibility
	• Distribute MBPE approved standards to school districts	May 1998	Linda Peterson
	• Provide technical assistance to districts	Ongoing	OPI Staff
	• Begin to develop model assessments	May 1998	OPI Staff and Outside Expert
	• Begin to develop model curriculum	May 1999	OPI Staff and state educators
Second stage of the standards review and development begins again with Phase One	• Science, Communications Arts, and Arts Standards Work	May 1998	Executive Team
	• Develop draft OPI Legislative proposal for January 1999	May 1998	Nancy Keenan, OPI Cabinet and staff

Standards

(Continued from page 5)

parents, and focus groups. When the final documents have been submitted to the Board of Public Education, copies will be distributed to Montana's public libraries for review. This effort will be coordinated by OPI and local PTA representatives, who will be the point of contact for comments on the content and performance standards and benchmarks. ■

Forest management on state school trust lands

This is the second in a series of five articles about Montana's state school trust lands and their management.

Of Montana's 5.2 million acres of school trust lands, 662,000 are forested. These acres are managed by the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation's (DNRC) Forest Management Bureau located in Missoula and by the foresters and other resource specialists distributed among the state's six Land Offices. Since the majority of the forested trust lands are located west of the continental divide, most forest management staff work out of the DNRC's North-western and Southwestern Land Offices.

Income

Income is derived from the trust forests primarily through the sale of forest products, with timber, which is sold to mills throughout the state by sealed competitive bid, being the main product. Last year, the forest management program generated about \$5.7 million in revenue, the majority of which public schools received as direct state aid payments for their

maintenance and support. An additional portion was deposited in the Technology Acquisition Fund, which was established by the 1995 Legislature as a means to enhance technology education in our public schools (see the box below for more information).

Forest Land Management Plan

The management of the forested Trust Lands is guided by the State Forest Land Management Plan (SFLMP), which the State Board of Land Commissioners approved on June 17, 1996. That guidance takes the form of general management philosophy and specific resource management standards. The following excerpt summarizes the strategic guidance that the SFLMP provides.

"Our premise is that the best way to produce long-term income for the trust is to manage intensively for healthy and biologically diverse forests. Our understanding is that a diverse forest is a stable forest that will produce the most reliable and highest long-term revenue stream.

Healthy and biologically diverse forests would provide for sustained income from both timber and a variety of other uses. They would also help maintain stable trust income in the face of uncertainty regarding future resource values. In the foreseeable future, timber management will continue to be our primary source of revenue and primary tool for achieving biodiversity objectives."

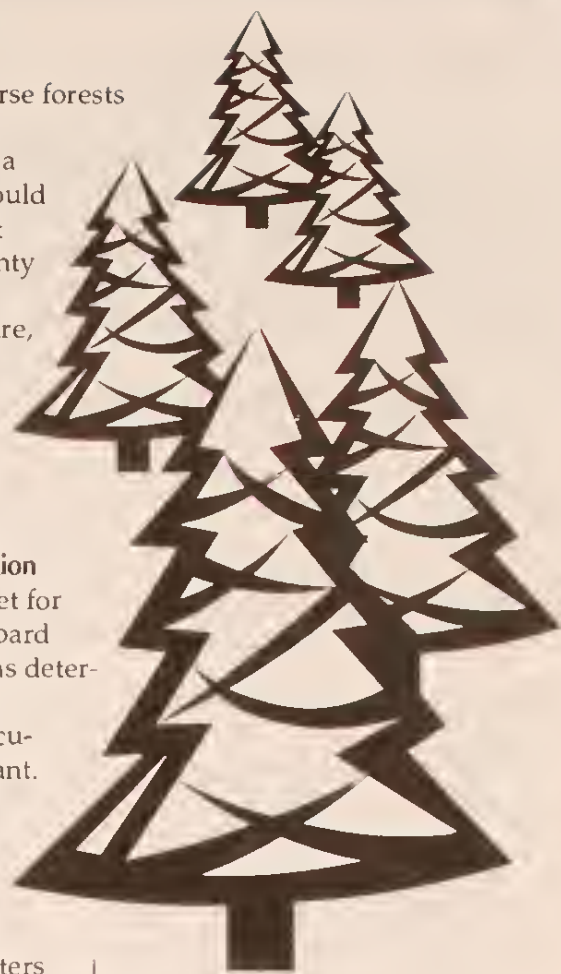
Production targets and conservation

The annual timber sale target for trust lands is 42.164 million board feet. Set by law, that target was determined through an estimate of sustainable yield that was calculated by a third party consultant. The state's foresters achieved that target in the past fiscal year and expect to meet it again in the current fiscal year.

State school trust land foresters are not only meeting their production targets, but they are also working hard to conserve the state's resources. Environmental reviews are completed for all timber sales. Those reviews provide decision-makers with the information they need to weigh potential environmental impacts and revenues and, thereby, to choose the timber management alternative that best satisfies the trust obligation, while meeting all other legal obligations.

A recent audit provided evidence of the quality of work on our school trust forests. In the 1997 audit of forest practices, independent teams of foresters and resource specialists evaluated the application of best management practices (BMPs) for forestry on a sample of timber sales across all owner-ships.

Those teams found that the state trust land foresters ranked higher than all other forest managers in Montana.



The future

The conflicting demands on school trust forests have increased dramatically over the past ten years, and that trend is expected to continue. To face those conflicting demands, our school trust land foresters will rely on the State Forest Land Management Plan to serve as their guide, ensuring that they stay focused on the fundamental trust management goals. With their focused efforts we can expect to maintain healthy, productive forests that provide a reliable source of substantial revenue for our schools. ■

—Pat Flowers, Forest Management Bureau Chief, Trust Land Management Division, DNRC

Editor's note: For more information, either contact the Trust Land Management Division (444-2074) or keep reading Montana Schools. The next issue will contain the third article in this series.

State Technology Acquisition Grants

State Technology Acquisition Grants are funded through income produced from timber harvests on school trust lands. The money may only be spent for technology-related purposes, including the purchase, rental, repair, and maintenance of technological equipment and associated training for school district personnel.

The actual amount available for distribution in a particular year will depend on actual timber volume harvested, the timber market, and bid prices. Therefore, districts should expect the amount of their grant to vary from year to year and should not make specific plans for expenditure of the funds until the amount of each year's grant is known. The grant money will be disbursed to school districts every August.

This past August, OPI distributed \$1,505,000 to school districts in the form of State Technology Acquisition Grants. By law, this money is prorated to each district based on the ratio that the district's BASE budget bears to the statewide BASE budget amount. For FY 1998, payments ranged from \$7.50 per ANB to \$20 per ANB.

OPI releases 1997 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Report

Referring to a report on youth health risks recently published by the state Office of Public Instruction (OPI), State Superintendent Nancy Keenan congratulated Montana's young people for meeting or exceeding many of the nation's health goals for adolescents. "Montana youth have healthier behaviors than the national norm in many respects," she said.

More work needed

But, Keenan also called upon the state's teens, parents, communities, and schools to work even harder to reduce behaviors that put adolescents at risk for health problems. "We adults also need to do even better in helping kids make healthy choices," Keenan

said. "Parents must be the key players in this effort. They have the primary responsibility for their children's health. They are their children's first teachers and most important role models."

The YRBS Report

The report, the 1997 *Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey Report*, details the health risk behaviors that cause the most deaths,

Montana youth have healthier behaviors than the national norm in many respects.

—Nancy Keenan

diseases, disabilities, and social problems among Montana high school youth. These behaviors include, among other things, intentional and unintentional injuries, tobacco, alcohol, and drug use;

physical inactivity and sexual behaviors that result in sexually transmitted diseases and unintended pregnancies.

The report contains data gathered in March 1997 through a survey developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 19 other federal agencies, and state and local departments of education. The survey, which is strictly voluntary and confidential, was taken by 14,241 Montana students in grades 9-12.

The report compares Montana's survey results to national health objectives. For example, whereas only 17 percent of Montana youth wear seatbelts every time they get in a car, the objective for the year 2000 is for all occupants to wear seatbelts 85 percent of the time.

Some data on Montana's teens

The survey shows that Montana

teens are a little less likely to fight than their national counterparts (32 percent have been involved in a physical fight in the past year compared to 39 percent nationally). But, Montana teens carry weapons more often than other students nationwide. While 25 percent of Montana teens currently smoke regularly, they are less likely to be sexually active than their national counterparts. And the vast majority—over 90 percent—have been educated about the dangers of AIDS.

More Montana youth said they have tried marijuana in 1997 than in 1995, and Montana youth continue to use chewing tobacco and snuff at more than twice the national rate.

"Adolescent behaviors reflect community behaviors; they are an

(Continued on page 12)

Technology Literacy Challenge Fund Grants

Since the first round of Technology Literacy Challenge Fund (TLCF) grants were awarded, interested school districts and consortia have raised a number of valid questions about the nature of the TLCF program and the process used to review the grant applications. Clearing up this confusion is important. Congress is expected to continue to fund the TLCF program for another three years, and interested applicants must start preparing for the next

round of grant competition, which will start this coming winter or early spring. Michael Hall, OPI Instructional Technology Specialist, has prepared the following list of answers to questions he's been most frequently asked. Announcements of the upcoming grant application process and deadlines will be sent to all school district authorized representatives for federal programs. It will also be published in Montana Schools, and posted on METNET and OPI's Internet homepage.

Frequently asked questions about the grant process

What priorities did Montana establish for the TLCF funds?

The TLCF money shall be used to enhance student learning through:

- ✓ Integrating technology into the curriculum and instruction at district and school levels and providing appropriate staff development; and/or
- ✓ Obtaining and maintaining connections to the information superhighway, and providing the appropriate staff development.

What requirements did OPI have to meet to bring the funds into the state?

For Montana to receive TLCF money, OPI was required to submit a statewide technology plan that addressed specific issues. The plan was adapted from the work done by the statewide Technology Task Force as part of the Montana state Goals 2000 planning process. While Montana did not continue with the Goals 2000 process, the plan provided valuable guidance for the preparation of Montana's application for the TLCF funds.

Federal law also required OPI to make sure Montana's TLCF money

- ✓ funds projects of sufficient size and scope, duration and quality to improve student learning;
- ✓ funds projects that are part of a comprehensive school improvement plan;
- ✓ provides ongoing professional development in the integration of quality educational technologies;
- ✓ supports local technology plans that meet the required elements;
- ✓ provides educational services for adults and families; and
- ✓ offers program benefits to private schools, students, teachers, and other educational personnel on an equitable basis.

Why didn't OPI distribute the funds to all districts on a per pupil basis?

The federal program specifies that state education

agencies disburse TLCF money through a competitive process, awarding grants that are of sufficient size and scope, duration and quality to improve student learning. Thus, it was not, and is not possible to distribute these funds to all school districts on a per pupil basis.

Why did OPI establish a need rating for applicant districts?

According to the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE), Congress intended that *all* of the state level TLCF funds would be awarded to districts with high need for technology and high poverty rates. Through its federal application, OPI obtained permission to include other districts

as well. To do this, however, OPI had to agree to make sure that at least 50 percent of Montana's TLCF appropriation was awarded to districts with high technology need and high poverty levels. As long as OPI fulfills this requirement, other districts in the state will also be able to benefit from this program.

What information was used to establish the need rating?

A school district's poverty level was determined by using data from the guaranteed tax base and its free and reduced lunch program participation. A district's level of technology need was ascertained through the information it submitted on the technology survey conducted by Quality Education Data of Denver, Colorado, this past year. The combination of these two categories resulted in a need rating ranging from 0-16. That rating was built into the grant review process as part of the 100 possible points a district application could receive. The need rating was produced, posted on OPI's homepage and METNET, and sent to school districts with their application materials.

Who reviewed the grant applications?

School district personnel from around the state reviewed the TLCF grant applications. District technology coordinators were asked to be reviewers, and, if they were not available, they recommended another person in their district who was actively involved in technology or technology planning. From the pool of those who expressed interest, about half were able to participate.

What were the need ratings of the grants awarded?

In order to satisfy the federal requirement for high need, seven grants were awarded to school districts whose need ratings ranged from 8 to 12.5. Nine additional projects, five of which had a need rating of 5 or less, received grants. So, while the need rating was important, the most critical factor seemed to be a well-written application, which clearly and specifically addressed the information and criteria that were asked for both on the grant application form and in the application supplemental information.

How were the successful district applications chosen?

First, in order to be fair to those applicants who submitted their applications on time, no application that arrived at OPI after the published deadline was included in the grant competition. The remaining applications were evaluated as follows.

At least two reviewers evaluated each district's application according to the criteria specifically outlined in the supplemental materials that were disseminated with the grant application forms. If the two reviewers gave an application scores that were separated by more than 15 points, a third reviewer looked at the grant independently, and the two most similar scores were used to determine the application's final average score. Upon compilation of the final scores, awards were made to districts based upon their total scores. ■

Sixteen TLCF proposals receive grants

Ninety two applications representing 219 districts were received and reviewed for the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund (TLCF) competitive grants. Information about the funded proposals and their accompanying technology plans are posted on OPI's homepage at <<http://www.metnet.mt.gov>>. The following applicants, representing 27 school districts, received grants.

Arlee	Brockton	Melstone	Roundup
Ashland	Hays-Lodge Pole	Philipsburg	Ronan
Belgrade	Lewistown	Reedpoint	Valley View
Box Elder	Lone Rock	Rocky Boy	White Sulphur Springs

Originally, 15 grants representing 25 school districts were awarded. After reviewing the proposed budgets during the awarding process, it was possible to fund one more application, which represented two districts. That district was White Sulphur Springs.

METNET and State BBS now on the Web

With its new *FirstClass* Intranet software upgrade, anyone can access the State Intranet Bulletin Board System (BBS) using their favorite web browser. Registered users can now access the State BBS through the Internet and post messages to the Web. Non-registered users can browse the entire BBS content.

For more information, call Steve Meredith (444-3563), Betsy Nordell (444-1626), or Janet Andrew (444-2765). In addition, check out the new services that this software upgrade provides for METNET users by reading Meredith's dispatch on page 11 of this issue. ■



E-Rate Update

Keep those technology plans coming! OPI and members of the Montana EdLiNC (Education and Libraries Networks Coalition) continue to review the technology plans of school districts in anticipation of a January 12, 1998, opening of the Schools and Libraries Corporation (SLC) website for applying for E-Rate discounts. At press time, 218 school districts have received approval for their technology plans.

Seventy-five-day application window

On October 31, 1997, the SLC adopted a filing

window of 75 days. All requests for support that are received by the SLC within 75 days of the date it starts accepting requests will be treated as if they were simultaneously received.

Places to go for more information

The SLC has issued two documents: *Nine Steps You Can Take Now to Prepare for the Schools and Libraries Universal Service Program*; and *Questions and Answers on Implementation of the Universal Service Program for Schools and Libraries*. Both contain specific, useful information and are posted on the METNET desktop under the ERATE icon. Also, with financial support from Bell Atlantic, EdLiNC has launched a new web site <<http://www.eratehotline.org>> and hotline phone number (800-733-6860). ■

"Dispatches" are updates by Office of Public Instruction staff. Staff members may be reached at the phone numbers listed or by writing them at the Office of Public Instruction, P.O. Box 202501, Helena, MT 59620-2501.

Literacy/Learn and Serve
June Atkins, Coordinator
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jatkins@opi.mt.gov

What's happening in literacy?

Given education's prominence on both the national and state agendas, this is a busy time for the development of literacy and education policy. I encourage you to become involved so you can help make well-informed decisions based on knowledge and research. I also encourage you to take advantage of opportunities to involve your colleagues, your community, and your elected representatives in discussions about what is working well and what is needed for a balanced program in reading education.

Educational issues

On the forefront of national and state educational issues are the America Reads Challenge Initiative, the voluntary national fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math tests, the redrafting of the Higher Education Act with its provisions on teacher education, the Adult and Vocational Education Act, OPI's School Improvement Initiative and Educational Profile, Teacher Standards and Practices, and the Community Service Montana Summit. All of these issues are interrelated and will impact our classrooms.

America Reads Challenge

The America Reads Challenge is a nonpartisan effort to ensure that all children in the U.S. can read well by fourth grade.

This initiative *does not mean that we are not doing a good job*; instead, the initiative is based on the belief that there is always room for improvement, especially in an area of such great importance. Reading well is essential to democracy, responsible environmental stewardship, success in the workplace, and other civic virtues.

Presently, the America Reads program provides tutors through community volunteer programs, AmeriCorps, and college and university work-study programs. Many Montana campuses have established work-study tutors and AmeriCorps volunteers—you may already have some working in your schools and communities.

In addition, an America Reads steering committee of teachers, administrators, higher education faculty members, and representatives from AmeriCorps, Campus Compact and Community-Service has convened. The committee is to help develop the America Reads Volunteer program in Montana and to provide materials to train volunteer reading tutors.

Tutoring handbook

The International Reading Association (IRA) has published a handbook specifically for the America Reads Initiative. Titled *The Reading Team: A Handbook for Volunteer Tutors K-3*, this handbook can be obtained from the Order Department, IRA, 800 Barksdale Road, PO Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139 (302-731-1600, ext. 265). It costs \$14.95 (IRA members less 20 percent), plus \$3.00 postage. The handbook's coauthors, Dr. Barbara Walker of MSU-Billings and Dr. Leslie Mandel Morrow of Rutgers University, have also published the article "America Reads: Ideas on Getting a Program Started," in the October/November 1997 issue of the IRA publication *READING TODAY* (Vol. 15, No 2, pages 30-31).

For more information about the America Reads program in Montana, contact me, your college or university reading and literacy faculty, or your Campus Compact coordinator or Work-Study program director. Dr. Barbara Walker, MSU-Billings, Dr. Marian McKenna, University of Montana, or Rita Surber, Montana State Reading Council president, Meadowlark School, Chinook, can also provide assistance. In addition, you may want to visit the U.S. Department of Education's website at www.ed.gov/finits/americanreads/.

What's happening in Learn and Serve?

The Learn and Serve Montana Program aims to help schools meet

their K-12 curriculum objectives while integrating learning and community service. A service-learning project should

- ✓ be based on real community needs;
- ✓ involve students at every phase;
- ✓ integrate the project into the curriculum;
- ✓ evaluate student learning; and
- ✓ provide opportunity for students' self-reflection.

Competitive mini-grants available

The Office of Public Instruction (OPI) is now accepting applications for its Learn and Serve Montana Competitive Mini-Grant Program. Depending upon their scope, projects and programs will receive awards ranging from \$500-\$3,500. Eligible applicants can be a teacher, team of teachers, students, or a school district working in partnership with one or more qualified public or private nonprofit organizations. To qualify, a project or program must make service-learning opportunities available for school-age volunteers.

If you would like an application, contact me. Completed applications are due January 16, 1998, by 5 p.m.,

and successful applicants will be notified by January 30, 1998.

Volunteer Montana! Education Corps

Do you need volunteers at your school? If your answer is yes, help is on the way.

Volunteer Montana! (VMT!), a statewide AmeriCorps program, mobilizes volunteers and coordinates volunteer-based projects for community agencies across the state. VMT! has been awarded a grant from the Corporation for National Service to collaborate with OPI in a three-year demonstration project designed to increase the number of volunteer tutors, mentors and service-learning coordinators available to K-12 schools.

Through their grant, VMT! will create an Education Corps and provide living costs, training, and other expenses for participants in their volunteer coordinator program.

Each participating school will be responsible for office space and a stipend for their coordinator.

Apply for a volunteer coordinator

Schools now have an opportunity to apply for a volunteer

coordinator(s) by writing a proposal to VMT! The program

places primary emphasis on volunteer service activities that directly impact student achievement, particularly in reading and literacy, and the generation of sustainable vehicles

that engage students in school-based service-learning. Education Corps members can, for example, help a school implement a comprehensive approach to programs and services which ensure the academic achievement of all students.

Information about the volunteer program and addresses for applying have been faxed to schools. The deadline for proposals is January 16, 1998. If you need more information, contact me.

Science-Mathematics Consortium for Northwest Schools (SMCNWS)
Patricia B. Johnson, State Coordinator
444-2736
pjohnson@opi.mt.gov

One of 10 regional consortia founded by Congress and administered by the U. S. Department of Education (USDOE), the Science and Mathematics Consortium for Northwest Schools (SMCNWS) serves schools and education-related agencies in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington.

The SMCNWS's services are designed to render catalytic support that will somehow broaden the effect, accelerate the pace, and increase the effectiveness of re-

gional improvements in science and mathematics education.

Staff Development Support Program

SMCNWS has a small amount of money to help school districts provide staff development that produces a measurable change in the way that science and mathematics are delivered or assessed. This funding will be awarded through a competitive application process.

To be considered for funding, projects must:

- ✓ represent part of a sustained, systemic effort to improve math or science education in a school district (or a combination of districts);
- ✓ provide high-quality training for teachers and other educators;
- ✓ include strong follow-up, dissemination, and evaluation components;
- ✓ be in line with state and local standards for math and science;
- ✓ involve SMCNWS staff in planning, implementation, or follow-up; and
- ✓ provide a minimum 2:1 local financial match.

In addition, applications must be submitted by a team of two or more educators and have the support of the school district. Teams representing consortiums of several districts are welcome to apply, while nonschool-based organizations are encouraged to form partnerships with school districts to undertake staff development activities.

Application materials

Full application materials are posted on the worldwide web at <http://col-ed.org/mt>. Please print or download them from the web to save time and postage. Most public libraries provide Internet access, if you do not have it at work or at home.

Please contact me for advice while preparing your application. Applications must be postmarked on or before January 9, 1998.

Nutrition Education & Training
Katie Bark, R.D., Coordinator
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uhdkb@montana.edu

Don't miss these opportunities

With assistance from a USDA Team Nutrition grant and support from the Nutrition Education & Training (NET) Program, assistance is available to school staff for nutrition education efforts for children. Take advantage of the following resources and grant opportunities.

New video coming your way:

I am pleased to announce that a copy of our new video *The Food Pyramid: High Five for a Healthy You* has been sent to each elementary (K-8) school librarian/media specialist and to each school food service director in Montana's schools. A lively, upbeat MTV-style overview of the food guide pyramid, this video features teens and celebrities demonstrating health-promoting choices of food selection

and physical activity—both vital components of the health equation. *High Five* is just 14 minutes long and targets students in grades 3-8. A leader's guide accompanies each video. I think you'll find *High Five* to be a valuable resource for school staff.

New Team Nutrition Resources

- ✓ A *Team Nutrition Planning Calendar for School Year 1997-98* along with the *Calendar Companion* have been sent to Team Nutrition School leaders and each school food service manager. This useful calendar illustrates many opportunities for coordinating nutrition education with events throughout the year, and the *Calendar Companion* suggests activities, handouts, and recipes that can bring those ideas to life.
- ✓ *Team Up at Home Reproducible* are attractive family activity sheets, which are reproducible for nutrition education in the home.
- ✓ *Go, Glow, Grow Foods For You* is a colorful, interactive nutrition activity booklet for preschool-kindergarten children. Its focus is the food guide pyramid and eating a variety of foods that make you "glow, grow and go!"

If you would like a copy of these resources, please send your request on school letterhead to: USDA, Team Nutrition, P.O. Box 0812, Rockville, MD 20848-0812 (fax: 301-770-5164).

Mini-Grant Opportunities Available for 1997-98 school year:

Once again, *new* Team Nutrition Schools can apply for *Team Nutrition School Mini-Grants* of up to \$100 to support their efforts to hold a school-wide nutrition promotion. Awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, these funds can cover expenses associated with a local event that kicks off a school's Team Nutrition Program. Applications will be accepted until March 3, 1998—or until the grant money is all disbursed—and activities must be completed by June 30, 1998. To qualify as "new," schools must have joined the Team Nutrition program on or after July 1, 1997.

School food service managers and new Team Nutrition School leaders should have received a mini-grant application in early November. The application form is also posted on METNET in the School Food Services conference area.

Nutrition Education & Training Program Mini-Grants

Mini grants of \$100 up to \$500 will be available to all schools to support nutrition education and school food service training programs in Montana. Grants can be used to fund training for school staff on nutrition education or school food service, a Team Nutrition promotional event, a school-wide nutrition event, purchases of nutrition education resources for classroom use, or other nutrition

education related events linking the classroom to the school cafeteria and community. Applications have been sent to school food service managers and principals. The application form is also posted on METNET in the School Food Services conference area. The deadline for submission is January 23, 1998, and grants will be awarded in late February. Activities funded by these mini-grants must be completed by December 18, 1998.

Assistance available
For more information on these mini-grant programs or for additional assistance with nutrition education for school-aged children, please contact me.

HIV/AIDS Education
Susan Court, Specialist
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World AIDS Day

The theme for this year's World AIDS Day was *Give Children Hope in a World with AIDS*. The annual December 1 celebration took place with OPI and the Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS) cooperatively recognizing Montanans for their exemplary efforts in the fight against AIDS. Both Governor Marc Racicot and State Superintendent Nancy Keenan were on hand to personally honor the award recipients for their exemplary work in HIV/AIDS education and prevention at a luncheon and annual awards ceremony in Helena.

OPI recognized seven educators and students for their work in the area of AIDS education and awareness and their efforts to make knowledge about the disease an incorporated part of their school district's curriculum. This year OPI honored Kaaren Risor, a school nurse from Ashland; Betsy Morrison, Craig Beals and Erin Gallinger, peer educators for Billings Skyview High School; Arch Arntson and Mary Evans, health enhancement teachers at East Middle School in Butte; and Jane Griffith, a Butte Central High School teacher.

To be considered for World AIDS Day recognition, individuals were first nominated by someone from their local community.

New Resource

Media Works has recently released a new resource, *Raising Healthy Kids: Families Talk About Sexual Health*, designed to help families communicate about topics relating to sexual health. It includes two 30-minute videos (*For Parents of Young Children* and *For Parents of Preadolescent and Adolescent Children*) with discussion guides. The videos are well done and have received tremendous reviews from educators and public health experts.

Parent-teacher organizations or any group interested in communicating with young people on these issues in a better and more productive manner would find these

videos an aid in presenting topics concerning sexuality to youngsters. For more information call Beth Alling (978-768-0028) or write Media Works, P.O. Box 15597, Kenmore Station, Boston MA 02215.

Conflict Resolution Education

Conflict resolution education provides students with the knowledge, abilities and processes needed to understand and use alternatives to self-destructive, violent behavior when confronted with interpersonal or intergroup conflict. Conflict resolution skills include problem-solving and building effective relationships for reaching agreements and for shaping how people choose to disagree. When adolescents learn constructive ways to address the conflict that can lead to violence, the incidence and intensity of conflict will diminish.

Conflict resolution programs can also help schools create a more orderly learning environment, develop policies on conflict resolution, and evaluate curriculum decisions and assessments of learning. Caring, respect, tolerance and community building become the norm when conflict resolution is practiced by everyone.

A series of workshops addressing conflict resolution programs is being readied for presentation at various sites across Montana during January 1998. The workshops will provide teachers, counselors and administrators with an "in-depth overview" of the different programs available for Montana schools. Workshop participants will be shown state-of-the-art models for conflict resolution curricula and peer mediation. The presenters of these workshops, Montana Mediators, can provide more information about conflict resolution programs and about the upcoming workshops. Contact them at (tel: 543-1113; email: kitty@montana.com) or visit their website <<http://www.montanamediate.com>>.

Traffic Education
Curt Hahn, Specialist
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New Montana Driver's Manual

The Montana Department of Justice has revised the Montana Driver's Manual—not only does the new manual have a different

cover, it also contains updated information including recent changes in law. Consequently, new versions of the driver's test to match the new manual have been developed and distributed to drivers' exam stations and CDTP traffic education instruc-

tors around the state.

The new driver's tests should have been distributed to certified CDTP traffic education instructors no later than November 1st. If you did not receive yours, please give me a call.

While the new manual was officially put into use on October 1, 1997, the state Motor Vehicle Division continued to honor the old tests through November for those traffic education classes that started before October 1, 1997.

Sniffing out drunk drivers

Traffic educators may want to share this information with their students; it could prove to be a real eye-opener for teenagers.

Often drinking drivers chew breath mints, empty a can of air freshener, or hide their beer if they're pulled over. It may have fooled police in the past, but it won't anymore. Many law enforcement officers are now carrying high-tech tools which quickly sniff out alcohol to the thousandth degree. Because these "tools" have such a deceptively innocent appearance, many motorists won't even know they are being used.

Devices such as the *P.A.S. III Passive Alcohol Sensor* (with the sensor integrated into a working flashlight), and *Cruiser Mate* (a clipboard model) quickly measure alcohol in the surrounding air. These devices, along with others more obvious like *PBA-3000* and *Mark X*, are the latest accurate and easy-to-use tools available to "sniff" out alcohol.

These devices are widely used

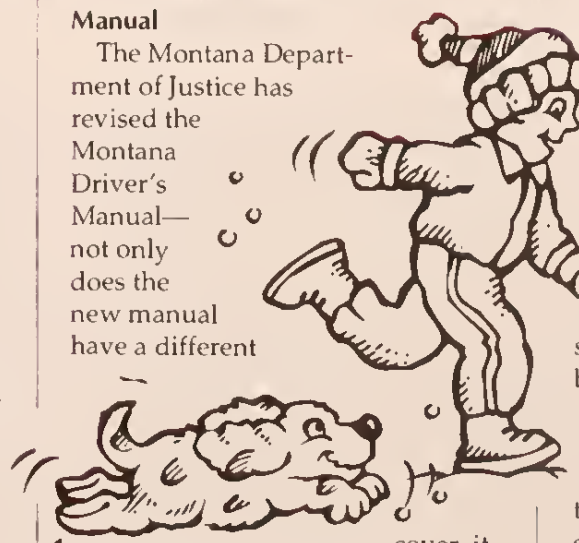
Passive alcohol sensing devices are helping to overcome many of the most common obstacles to detecting impaired drivers. Motorists often excuse the smell of liquor in a vehicle with explanations like "Someone spilled a drink on me" or "I ate a rum ball." Exhaust fumes can mask the odor of liquor. Colds or allergies can interfere with an officer's ability to smell liquor in a vehicle. And some people drink vodka in the false assumption that its odor is undetectable on their breath.

Emergency rooms now routinely use these devices to determine alcohol levels of unconscious victims. Harness racing officials test trainers and jockeys before each race. Prisons screen inmates and visitors and search out hidden "hooch." Commercial trucking and construction companies rely on them to cut accident rates. They also aid security officers at concerts, sporting events, and on military bases.

How do they work

When people speak near one of the devices, the device draws in a sampling of their breath. The air is pumped over fuel cells, and any alcohol in the sampling is burned off. This process produces an electrical current that translates into a display, alerting the tester to the presence of alcohol.

Because they pull in ambient air,



the units are used strictly to determine whether further testing is warranted. They are quiet, non-invasive, and cannot be fooled by cover-up odors. A five-second sampling is all that's required.

Some drunk drivers think they can "beat" the passive alcohol sensing technology by claiming they have recently used mouthwash or cough syrup. It is true that the alcohol odor from these substances, which is known as "mouth alcohol," can trigger false positives on passive alcohol sensors. However, mouth alcohol dissipates within 15 minutes, and its presence will just trigger further testing by the officer.

Fast Lanes: Risky Roads

This new 13 minute video and brochure produced by Geico Insurance explores risk behaviors that affect young people's lives. Teen actors deliver a peer-driven reality check about risk taking with straight talk among friends. This is appropriate for all teenage drivers. For your free copy and accompanying brochures for your students call 317-876-6046 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., EST.

Family and Consumer Science
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MISSION: 20/20 Vision for 2020

Two educational events this fall helped me align the views, which my right eye and my left eye had previously seen independent from one another, into a merged vision—a much clearer picture!

These two events were the *Work Now and in the Future* Conference and a joint meeting of the Texas Skill Standards Board and the

National Skill Standards Board. Below, I summarize the most important components of that merged vision for an educational

system.

People

It is critical to recognize and include all parties—students, teachers, parents, school board, administration, curriculum directors, counselors, and business, industry, and agency representatives—as essential contributors in the design and delivery of the educational process. Please note: when I use the word *people* in this dispatch article, I mean to refer to all these parties.

Physical components

We need a system which recognizes family, school, and community as the preparatory grounds for placing students in "the job market" and which allows all students to explore what "job market" options are and to develop an understanding that "work," paid or unpaid, is a successful outcome of education. This should include providing inservice education for *people* and

scheduling learning time for students and common planning time for teachers. In addition, the physical attributes of the school—its location with respect to business and industry as well as available space—should be "creatively" used to deliver educational opportunities.

Resources:

Other resources, both present and potential, also need to be viewed with a creative eye. For example, How can

- ✓ funds from many different pieces of legislation (Carl Perkins, School-to-Work, ESEA, national skill standards, and state vocational education funding) be used to accomplish a desired product?
- ✓ a talent pool of teachers, current and former students, and community, business, and agency people be developed and tapped to enhance educational offerings?
- ✓ we make better use of time—does length of seat time in class yield learning? does identification of what students should know or be able to do facilitate learning?

Working from the premise that we care that our students have successful futures, we can extend the reach of available resources by putting together a plan in which all the *people* involved identify "why we're here" and "what we want to accomplish." In addition, we can also help make the best possible use of available resources by using the desire of business and industry for qualified workers and leaders to develop a common nomenclature for standards of performance and assessment across industries and occupations.

Attitudes

Because our world is changing, as are the demands on our students, we periodically need to revisit the education programs we have in place. Some of the questions we need to ask ourselves and each other are:

- ✓ Are we satisfied with what we're doing or do we see room for improvement for our students' sake?
- ✓ Have we examined, from a faculty perspective, how we currently foster learning for our students? Is it teacher-directed, student-directed, or combination of the two?
- ✓ Are we investigating other methods of delivery and assessment?
- ✓ Do we read and share what's happening in other schools in our state and nation?
- ✓ Is there a group or person in our midst who is changing, moving, adapting, partnering?

Recognition

Recognizing the need to change in a considered, structured manner, is also a part of our preparations. In order for our educational system to adapt, the structures must be put in place to evaluate and accommodate change. These structures include

committees whose membership includes representatives of all the *people* involved in education; a vision plan with timelines; and pilot projects which help experiment

- with respect to delivery and
- assessment.

What does this mean for you?

Maybe my summarization has affirmed what you already knew. Maybe you hadn't



thought of one or more items I mentioned. Maybe you, alone, can assess how you and your role in the school system can help facilitate learning in a more positive way.

More than likely, however, you will influence a change in your education system only if you and one or more people discuss and evaluate together using the information above as a guide.

Why is "system" vital?

All parties must recognize and participate in developing and implementing a plan to incorporate career education, problem-solving strategies, and integrating academic, vocational and technological skills with workplace realities in order to help *all* students. The workplace and types of work available are rapidly changing with the advancement of technology. To prepare students for the future when we can't predict accurately what the future will be, the new focus of instruction should be those processes to arrive at answers and the use of those resources which require personal and technological skills. Only by including *all people*—which will both serve to educate them and allow them to contribute their expertise—will a new era linking school with work evolve.

METNET

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New Contracts

Schools should be aware that they can now take advantage of new contracts with Microsoft, McAfee (anti-virus software), Apple Computer, IBM, and Adobe. The price lists are only available on the Montana Educational Technology Network (METNET), and can be found in the lower right-hand corner of the desktop.

Schools can purchase off these prices without seeking competitive bids.

Home pages through METNET

Now you can use METNET to post an Internet home page. You don't even need to learn HTML code, but, if you want, you can include HTML documents. While these will appear as source code when opened using the METNET Intranet Client, they

will display normally when opened with a web browser.

Creating your home page folder

The home page folder in the METNET Intranet Client is like any other folder, except that the METNET Intranet Server publishes the contents of this folder on the Internet. As a result, anyone on the Internet can see what you put in the home page folder. The directions for creating your home page folder and placing various documents can be found in a message I posted December 2, 1997, in the Education News conference on METNET. If you cannot locate the message or need further instruction, please contact me or send a METNET message to system operators Janet Andrew or Betsy Nordell.

Using a web browser

You can connect to a METNET Intranet Server using a web browser such as Netscape Navigator or Internet Explorer. You can also log into a second METNET Intranet Server using a hyperlink in an open message or document. When you use these methods, you use a default settings document, which is stored on the server to which you are connecting, so you may not have full access to the system.

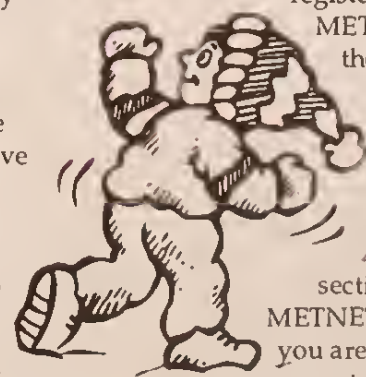
Using a web browser on METNET

Anyone with Internet access can view a home page on the METNET Intranet Server using their web browser. METNET home page addresses are constructed by typing the domain name followed by a slash, a tilde, the user's name or mail alias, and a slash. The first and last name are separated with the underscore character.

For example, to view Michael Hill's home page, you would use the address <http://www.metnet.gov/~Michael_Hill/>. If you are already on the METNET web page, you might look up Michael Hill in the directory and see that his mail alias is <michaelh@veritec.com.> To use his mail alias to view his home page, you could use <http://www.metnet.gov/~michaelh/>. When logged into your METNET Intranet Server, you simply click the Home Page button in the METNET Directory to see a user's home page folder. If a user has not yet created a home page folder, people typing in this address will see that user's METNET résumé.

Who is Eligible?

This home page service is only available to teachers who have registered on METNET with their teaching certificate folio number. For more information, see the *Ask the Administrator* section on the METNET desktop. If you are eligible, but cannot create a home page, you may not have been granted the required home page creation privilege. Contact your administrator and ask for it.



Bulletin Board

Listings in the Bulletin Board do not necessarily imply endorsement by the Office of Public

Training possibilities

Public Information Officer

The State Disaster and Emergency Services Manager is offering two trainings: January 26-30, 1998, the Public Information Officer's Course and March 30-April 3, 1998, the Principals of Emergency Management. In the first course, participants define and rehearse the role of the public information officer and the media. Courses are in Helena and offer continuing education units and credits. Contact Fred Naeher at <fnaeher@mt.gov> for more information.

Talents Unlimited

Talents Unlimited, a staff development program that helps teachers identify and nurture the multiple thought process strengths of their

students within the context of the regular classroom curriculum, is holding a national conference February 26-March 1 in Atlanta, GA. Participants will examine and explore the many ways the Talents Unlimited critical and creative thinking skills model can be used to provide learning opportunities for students. For more information, call Talents Unlimited (334-690-8060).

Contests

U.S. Savings bonds

The U.S. Savings bonds poster contest is a national contest for students in grades 4-6. The postmark deadline is February 6, 1998. If you need an entry kit, please call the Savings Bonds Marketing Office in Seattle (206-553-4537). Contest information is also available on the Internet at <www.savingsbonds.gov>.

Editor's Note: A number of other student contests are currently running. Their deadlines fall from January to April. If you are interested, please check out the Scholarships/Contest Info folder on METNET. It's in with the other Educational Conferences. Information that we receive can be posted there in a more complete manner than space allows here.

CALENDAR 1998

January

12-13: Tools for Schools, San Diego, CA—800-394-0115

February

8-14: FHA/HERO Week
26-28: Challenge Education With Aviation: A Montana Aviation Education Conference for Teachers, Billings—Jeanne Lesnik, Montana Aeronautics 444-2506 or <U5245@long.mdt.mt.gov>
27: Aviation Careers for High School Students, Billings—Jeanne Lesnik, 444-2506 or <U5245@long.mdt.mt.gov>

March

15-18: National Student Assistance Conference, Lake Buena Vista, FL—NSAC, 800-453-7733
23-28: Art & Science of Health Promotion Conference, Monterey, CA—American Journal of Health Promotion, 248-682-0707
25-28: National Youth Crime Prevention Conference, Orlando,

FL—202-446-6272 ext. 152
26-28: FHA/HERO State Leadership Conference, Billings—Laurie Stelter, OPI, 444-2059; email: lstelster@opi.mt.gov
26-28: National Conference on Creating the Quality School, Washington, DC—405-325-1450

April

14-15: Tools for Schools, Washington, DC—1-800-394-0115
22-28: National TV-Turnoff Week—TV-Free America 202-887-0436 or <tvfa@essential.org>
26-28: State Traffic Education Conference/Workshop, Helena—Curt Hahn, OPI, 444-4432

May

3-8: International Reading Conference, Orlando, FL—June Atkins, OPI, 444-3664

July

21-24: World Congress on Reading, Ocho Rios, Jamaica—June Atkins, OPI, 444-3664

If you would like to have your event listed on this calendar, please call or send an email message to Beth Satre, Editor (444-4397, bsatre@opi.mt.gov). Please include the date of your event, the location, and a contact name and number.

Kudos

Continued from page 6

Christine Egger has been named the winner of the eighth annual Montana Statehood Centennial Bell Award, which recognizes the Montana History Teacher of the Year for the 1996-97 school year. A teacher in Wolf Point, Egger and her students were guests of honor at a bell ringing ceremony on Montana Statehood Day, November 8th. Egger also received \$1,000, which covers travel expenses and the purchase of Montana history materials for her school library.

Two in a row—Whitewater wins the 1997 Montana Academic Challenge (MAC). Last spring, the Whitewater Pensive Penguins claimed their second MAC championship title in as many years. Team members are

Jonathan Haag, Kirk Reichelt, Andy Gertge, Aimee Hammond, and Brant Beyer. Whitewater's academic coach is Mike Beyer, and the team was sponsored by the Triangle Telephone Coop.

Tyler Pedersen, of C.R. Anderson Middle School in Helena won the Montana Banana Connection poster contest last spring. Open to K-12 students, the contest commemorated the visit of Jane Goodall to the Montana Environmental Education Conference in May 1997. Pedersen received a \$250 scholarship to an environmental camp of his choice.

Keila Davis of CR Anderson Middle School, Helena, and Jennifer Nydegger, a graduate of Broadwater High School,

Townsend, received Prudential Spirit of Community Awards for their volunteerism. This award is presented to each state's top two youth volunteers in each state. Davis and Nydegger each received a \$1,000 award.

Jennifer L. Harrison's students in grades K-4 at Roy Elementary were the first group to be chosen to participate in a virtual classroom contest. They are working with a second grade class at Ormsby school in Edmonton, Alberta, and Kao Primary School in Northland, New Zealand, to design a website project that must be online by January 31, 1998, and final judging will be in February. Their project is

called *A Children's Perspective—Past/Present/Future*.

Montana teachers Linda Edwards—Lewistown, Detlef Johl—Kessler, and Karen Mikota—Havre, applied for National Board Certification and received scholarships from the Montana Professional Teaching Foundation. This coming year, these three will undergo a rigorous, time- and skill-consuming process of professional peer review and self-scrutiny.

Craig Brownson, Billings, was one of 359 eighth-grade students who were honored for their writing skills last spring by the National Council of Teachers of English through their Promising Young Writers Program. ■

YRBS

Continued from page 7

extension of the community," said Keenan. "That's why it is essential for communities, parents, and schools to join forces in modeling and promoting healthy behaviors for our young people."

"The national objectives are designed to help us measure our progress toward healthy behaviors," Keenan said. "So many of the deaths, diseases, and injuries

that youth experience are preventable. If we can help teenagers

make healthy choices now, we can avoid poor health and high costs in the future."

Sponsors

The Montana survey was cosponsored by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the

So many of the deaths, diseases, and injuries that youth experience are preventable. If we can help teenagers make healthy choices now, we can avoid poor health and high costs in the future."

—Nancy Keenan

Office of Public Instruction, the Montana Board of Crime Control, the Department of Public Health and Human Services, the Department of Justice, the Indian Health Service, Health Mothers/Healthy Babies, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Montana, and Montana Communities in Action.

"The cosponsorship represents a broad base of public and private agency collaboration," Keenan said. "The most significant

contributors to the survey, however, are the Montana youth who volunteered to participate in the survey."

Now available

The full report and its summary are now available. Those interested are encouraged to contact their public library. ■

For more information, call Rick Chiotti, OPI (444-1963).

This document is printed at government expense. 14,000 copies of this public document were produced and distributed at an estimated cost of \$0.19 per copy.